

REMARKS

Claims

Claims 2-5 and 7-15 have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer.

Claims 1 and 6 have been amended. Claims 18-25 have been newly added.

Accordingly, claims 1, 6 and 16-25 are now pending in this application.

Priority

Applicants appreciate the Examiner's acknowledgment of the claim for priority.

Submitted herewith are certified copies of the corresponding Japanese Patent Applications (JP2001-019855, filed in Japan on January 29, 2001 and JP2001-026947, filed in Japan on February 2, 2001). An indication that these documents have been safely received would be appreciated.

Claim Rejections under 35 U.S.C. §101

Claims 11-15 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §101 because the claimed invention is directed to non-statutory subject matter. These rejections have been rendered moot by the cancellation of these claims.

Allowable Subject Matter

Claims 3-5 and 8-10 were objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the

limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Claims 16-17 were allowed over the prior art.

Claim Rejections under 35 U.S.C. §§ 102 and 103

Claims 1-2 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over admitted prior art in view of Asai (JP 11177821 A). Claims 6-7 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Asai. These rejections are considered moot in light of the amendments of these claims to incorporate the indicated allowable subject matter.

Amendments to the Claims

In order to put the application into condition for allowance by incorporating claims indicated to be allowable into their base claims and any intervening claims, the claims have been amended as follows:

Claim 1 has been amended to incorporate the subject matter of claims 2 and 3, while a limitation not necessary for patentability has been deleted from claim 1 and added as new dependent claims 22 and 23. Claims 2 and 3 have been canceled.

Claims 4 and 5 have been canceled, and new claims 18 and 19 added. Claim 18 incorporates the subject matter of claims 1, 2 and 4, while claim 19 incorporates the subject matter of claim 5.

Claim 6 has been amended to incorporate the subject matter of claims 7 and 8, while a limitation not necessary for patentability has been deleted from claim 6 and incorporated as new dependent claims 24 and 25. Claims 7 and 8 have been canceled.

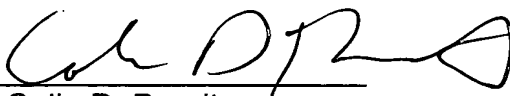
Claims 9 and 10 have been canceled, and new claims 20 and 21 added. Claim 20 incorporates the subject matter of claims 6, 7 and 9, while claim 21 incorporates the subject matter of claim 10.

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing, Applicant respectfully requests that a timely Notice of Allowance be issued in this case.

Respectfully submitted,

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